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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

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Office of Legislative Counsel

23 March 1978

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Ms. Diane LaVoy
Permanent Select Committee on
Intelligence
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Diane:

I am forwarding the enclosed post mortem (both the highly classified version as well as the declassified sanitized version) on Mayaguez to you. It is my understanding that you did not want to review the one on the [redacted] inasmuch as you already had it or already had seen it. We would appreciate your returning the classified version as soon as you get through with it -- so that we in turn can return it to IC Staff.

Thanks in advance.

Sincerely,

[redacted]
Assistant Legislative Counsel

Enclosures

[redacted]
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POST-MORTEM REPORT

*An Examination of the Intelligence Community's
Performance Before and During the
Mayaguez Incident of May 1975*

August 1975

A Study Prepared by the Intelligence Community Staff
for the
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

8 August 1975

Warning Notice
Sensitive Intelligence Sources and Methods Involved

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POST-MORTEM REPORT:

THE PERFORMANCE OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY BEFORE AND DURING THE MAYAGUEZ INCIDENT OF 12 MAY 1975

August 1975

NOTE

This Post-Mortem Report responds to a request from the Director of Central Intelligence for an examination of various problems highlighted by the Mayaguez seizure and its aftermath. It is one of a series concerning the Community's performance during crises prepared for the DCI by the Product Review Division of the Intelligence Community Staff.

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PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Intelligence Community reacted quickly and effectively to the Mayaguez crisis. It demonstrated a fundamental strength in the way its collection systems responded with speed and flexibility and its analytical capabilities provided immediate and effective service to operational users and high level consumers. It has already been demonstrated that the intelligence support machinery can cope with two simultaneous crises in two geographically separated areas. The Mayaguez crisis occurred in the same area which had just seen the collapse of the US allies in Vietnam and Cambodia, and—while it seriously tested the machinery's capacity in the initial stages to respond—found that machinery generally capable of meeting the challenge.

Still, there were aspects of the Community's performance both before and after the Mayaguez incident which prompt a close look, and their identification should help the Community serve national needs better during future crises.

— Before the Mayaguez was seized on 12 May, Cambodian Communist naval activities in the Gulf of Thailand did not seem to portend a threat to US interests. But there were at the time murky indications that the new regime in Phnom Penh was anxious to demonstrate its sovereignty as forcibly as possible, on both land and sea and against all presumed infringers.

— There was little awareness in the Community or elsewhere that a pattern might be forming, partly because most of the Cambodian Communist activity in the Gulf was directed against Vietnamese refugees and Thai fishermen, not international shipping, and partly because the two incidents that did involve foreign merchant ships did not have serious consequences. Thus no alerting device was triggered and there was no warning notice issued to US merchant shipping.

— When the Mayaguez was seized during the early morning hours (about 0300 EDT) on 12 May, word first reached Washington through the CRITIC system roughly two hours later. But word did not reach principals immediately upon receipt of the first CRITIC message. Nevertheless, all principals had been informed by around 0800 EDT, and both the intelligence and operational communities had by that time initiated a great deal of necessary activity.

— Intelligence reporting during the crisis, from 12 through 14 May, was rapid and effective, though at times unavoidably unclear. Information concerning the disposition of the Mayaguez crew was extremely difficult to obtain and to interpret.

— The tendency of the independent parts of the Community to report upward within their own organizations, rather than to exchange information laterally, may have hampered somewhat the effort to provide quick and clear intelligence support to the NSC.

We make the following explicit recommendations (and in Section VI. provide a rationale and a description of action under way concerning each):

I. A NOTE ON ORGANIZATION

1. Questions concerning the Intelligence Community's handling of the Mayaguez incident concentrate on three aspects of its performance during three very brief periods: the role of collection and analytical resources just before the Cambodian Communists' seizure of the ship; the functioning of the Community's critical intelligence system on 12 May, the day of the seizure; and the level of support provided by the Community when difficult decisions were being made and the US rescue effort was being organized. *See sections II., III., and IV. for appropriate discussion.*

2. These matters cannot be examined without reference to the internal workings of the Intelligence Community and to the relationship of the Community with other agencies of the Government. In this context, the principal questions are: Why weren't US merchant vessels warned to stay away from the Gulf of Thailand prior to the Mayaguez seizure? Were intelligence officers in one part of the Community well informed about what their counterparts elsewhere were doing and saying? And was the Community privy to the kinds of operational and policy information it needs during crises to function with full effectiveness? *We treat these and other questions in Section V., "Some Community Communications Problems."*

3. The paper concludes with a series of explicit recommendations, related commentaries, and descriptions of relevant work now under way. *See Section VI., "Recommendations Concerning Current and Future Activities."*

II. THE RECORD PRIOR TO THE SEIZURE

Collection Activities

4. The first indication that the new Cambodian Communist government might pose a threat to foreign flag shipping in the Gulf of Thailand was received on 4 May 1975 (eight days prior to the seizure). On that date, the USS Gridley advised the Commander in Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC) that it had heard merchant ship communications that reported the capture of a Korean tanker by an "unidentified communist ship" in the general vicinity of Poulo Wai Island. This information was immediately passed by the CINCPAC Intelligence Center Pacific (IPAC) in Honolulu to the National Military Command Center (NMCC) in the Pentagon, which, in turn, relayed it to the CIA Operations Center. IPAC's message was also sent to a large number of operational commands and intelligence centers within the Department of Defense.

5. On 5 May, CINCPAC advised the NMCC (and other addressees) of a US news service report of the same incident involving the Korean tanker. This report indicated that a Cambodian Communist ship had fired upon, damaged, but failed to stop the Korean tanker. On the same day, the FBIS reported in its Daily (Asia and Pacific) Report that the Seoul Domestic (Radio) Service had informed its listeners that on 4 May an ROK ocean-going freighter had been

fired upon "by what appeared to be an armed communist boat . . . on the high seas '200 miles southwest (sic) of Bangkok, Thailand." Next day (6 May), the FBIS Daily Report quoted a semi-official South Korean wire service (HAPTONG) release which stated that the South Korean Ministry of Transportation had been ordered to alert all Korean shipping operating in the South China Sea to the dangers of communist attacks.

6.

7.

8. The various reports on incidents in the Gulf attracted a great deal of attention within elements of the Community during the period of their issuance. (The complete record of reports from all sources is presented in the Table [opposite]). But INR/State was the only intelligence agency which produced a discrete, interpretive item for a finished intelligence publication reaching high-level readers. Specifically, on the basis of the US news service release and the item in the 5 May FBIS Report, INR on 5 May reported in its departmental publication, the *Afternoon Summary*, that a small South Korean tanker had been attacked by "what appeared to be an armed communist vessel," that the locale of the incident may have been "only two miles off a Cambodian island 58 miles from the Cambodian mainland," but that the circumstances of the encounter remained unclear.

A number of principals in other agencies were informed, orally, of one or another of these incidents, but no articles concerning them appeared in finished intelligence publications (such as CIA's *National Intelligence Daily* [NID] and DIA's *Defense Intelligence Notes* [DINs]). Finally, neither the Community nor any of its components issued any sort of special intelligence warning to policymakers.

Analysis

9. In April and early May the new communist regime in Phnom Penh was concentrating on the problem of extending and ensuring its control of the country as a whole. At the same time, it was moving vigorously to assert Cambodian territorial claims—on the mainland and in the Gulf—against any and all presumed infringers (including even the Vietnamese Communists). It now seems clear, with hindsight, that the regime was especially anxious to demonstrate its recently won sovereignty as forcibly as possible, and that it wanted to do so both at home and abroad. But it was not readily apparent from the reporting

TABLE

**Reports of Cambodian Communist
Actions Against Foreign Shipping in the Gulf of Thailand
Arranged by Date of Report (4-9 May 1975)**

US Source and Date of Report	Date of Incident	Nationality of Vessels	Description of Report
IPAC Message 4 May (0629 EDT)	4 May	South Korean	USS Gridley reports the relay by a US merchant ship of a message indicating that a South Korean tanker was being captured by an unidentified communist ship near Poulo Wai Island.
IPAC Message 5 May (0712 EDT)	4 May	Same incident as above	A US news service reports that a Cambodian Communist ship fired upon but failed to stop Korean ship 200 n.m. S.E. of Thailand.
FBIS Daily Report, Asia and Pacific, 5 May	4 May	Same incident as above	Seoul Domestic Service (at 2200 EDT) reports that a South Korean ship on the high seas 200 miles S.W. of Bangkok had apparently been fired on by an armed communist ship.
FBIS Daily Report, Asia and Pacific, 6 May			Seoul HAPTONG (semi-official news agency) release in English reports official South Korean government warning—based on attack cited above—to all South Korean ships operating in the South China Seas of the danger of communist attack.

or, indeed, from the behavior of the Cambodian Communists themselves, how the several incidents involving foreign shipping in the Gulf of Thailand might in some way be a part of this larger Cambodian purpose.

- Community analysts were at the time faced with the almost contemporaneous collapse of the governments and armed forces of South Vietnam and Cambodia and the formation of new communist governments in Saigon and Phnom Penh.

- The analysts in CIA, DIA, and INR who devoted full time to Cambodian matters were thus unavoidably preoccupied with complex questions which lacked visible answers. The same applies to analysts and supervisors in production offices who were responsible for the Indochina problem as a whole, and also to those concerned with the *worldwide* repercussions of the US withdrawal from Phnom Penh and Saigon.

- Cambodian Communist naval activities in the Gulf during early May did not seem to portend a threat to US interests, in part because incidents involving small craft were not at all unusual in the area, in part because neither of the two incidents involving ocean-going vessels had major international repercussions (because the Korean vessel was fired on but not detained, and the Panamanian ship was detained but quickly released).

- Analysts were aware of the new Cambodian regime's efforts to assert sovereignty over various islands in the Gulf. But they were not aware that international merchant shipping en route to Thailand regularly passed so close to these same islands.

10. In sum, to illustrate the kinds of problems then faced by production offices, these comments by one of the Community's senior Southeast Asian analysts seem especially apropos:

At the time of receipt, the intelligence on Cambodian seizure of small craft was duly noted as further evidence of the assertiveness and—in the case of the execution of the escaping South Vietnamese—the ruthlessness of the Khmer Communists. Since the coverage of the deportation of foreigners from Phnom Penh and of the executions in Cambodia had already dramatized the nature of the new leadership and since the seizure of small craft along the coast had been commonplace for years, these incidents did not appear to warrant separate treatment.

Information on Cambodian aggressiveness in laying claim to offshore islands was thought worthy of inclusion in [an article for a current intelligence publication] prepared by May 9 but not published until May 13. What [interested us] in this case was the linkage between Cambodian moves to occupy islands also claimed by the Vietnamese and

belligerent Cambodian actions against Vietnamese units along Cambodia's eastern border. . . .

In sum, [we were] . . . indeed preoccupied with the belligerent and ruthless posture being adopted by the new Cambodian government—

especially as revealed by the evacuation of 2 million people from Phnom Penh and the Khmer Communists' handling of the foreign community in the capital. The Korean and Panamanian ship incidents . . . were considered [at the time] to be relatively minor reflections of this story.

11. Withal, the fact remains: analysts in the Community did not perceive what can now be termed, with hindsight, the ominous pattern of events building up in the Gulf of Thailand in early May.

III. THE DAY OF THE SEIZURE

The CRITICs

12. First word of the seizure of the Mayaguez arrived in Washington via the critical intelligence (CRITIC) system,

The initial CRITIC message concerning the plight of the Mayaguez (see Map 1) was sent by the US Embassy in Jakarta at 0503 EDT on 12 May. It read, in full, as follows:

1. MR JOHN NEAL, DELTA EXPLORATION CO HERE IN JAKARTA RECEIVED FOLLOWING MAYDAY INFO FROM US SHIP MAYAGUEZ. "HAVE BEEN FIRED UPON AND BOARDED BY CAMBODIAN ARMED FORCES AT 9 DEGREES 48 MIN N/102 DEGREES 53 MIN E. SHIP BEING TOWED TO UNKNOWN CAMBODIAN PORT."

2. MR NEAL SAID MSG WAS SENT BY CREW IN SHIP'S RADIO ROOM WHICH WAS NOT OCCUPIED BY CAMBODIAN TROOPS. RADIO FREQUENCY IS 12421 MG. TIME OF INCIDENT WAS FEW MINUTES BEFORE 1530 LOCAL JAKARTA TIME [0430 EDT].

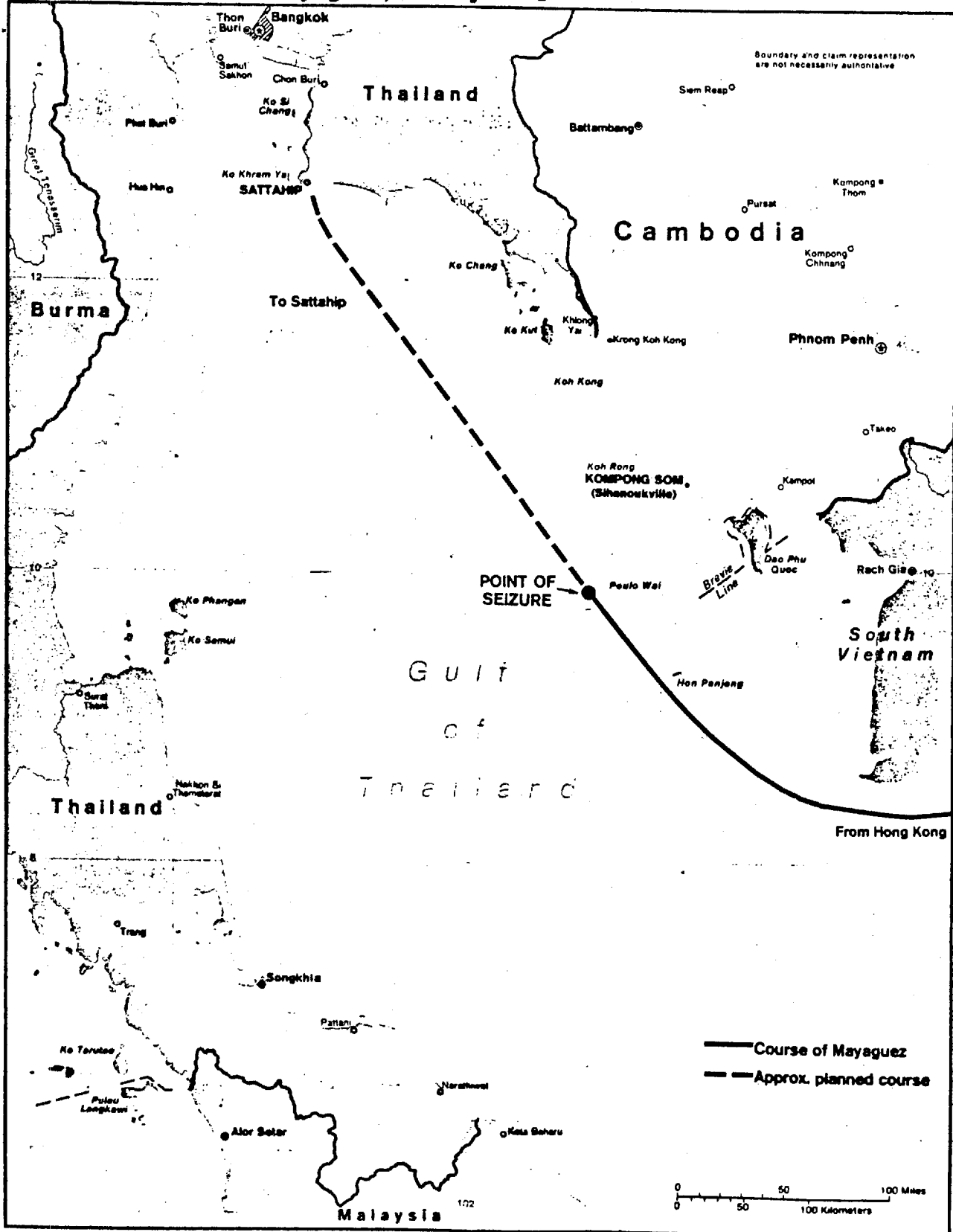
13. Within minutes after this message was sent, the Embassy in Jakarta followed up with another CRITIC report:

MR NEAL STILL IN CONTACT. VESSEL UNDER OWN POWER FOLLOWING ONE GUNBOAT (NFI) TO SIHANOUKVILLE. PROCEEDING VERY SLOW. SHIP OWNED BY SEA LAND. NO CASUALTIES. CREW DOES NOT FEEL TO BE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER. TROOPS ON BOARD DO NOT SPEAK ENGLISH. CREW STANDING BY FOR ANY INST.

14. A third CRITIC message, indicating that Mr. Neal had lost contact with the Mayaguez, was sent at around 0530 EDT. Twenty-five minutes later, at 0555 EDT, a new source, the Defense Attache Office in Manila (which had received copies of the initial CRITICs from Jakarta), informed Washington in the fourth CRITIC message that:

MR DELAS REYES RADIO OPERATOR IN MANILA (DZC-13) REPORTS RECEIVING RELAYED TRANSMISSION FROM BRINKER HOSS (AN OIL RIG OWNED BY PHILSUN OIL COMPANY) INDICATING CONTAINER SHIP MAYAGUEZ (WFZK) BEING TOWED BY CAMBODIAN TROOPS TO KOMPONG SOM. LAST INDICATED LOCATION: 00948N/10253E.

Map 1: Seizure of the Mayaguez, 12 May 1975



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15. The final CRITIC concerning the Mayaguez, this one again originating in Jakarta, was sent at 0650 EDT.

1. IN GOING OVER INCIDENT, MR NEAL STATED THAT ACTUAL TIME OF BOARDING AS REPORTED BY SHIP'S RADIO WAS 0718Z [0318 EDT]. (NOTE EARLIER MR NEAL INDICATED INCIDENT OCCURRED JUST PRIOR TO 0830Z [0430 EDT]. IT NOW APPEARS THAT SHIP WAS IN TROUBLE FOR ABOUT ONE HOUR BEFORE MAYDAY CALL RECEIVED BY MR NEAL). SHIP REPORTED PLACE OF INCIDENT NEAR PULUA KOH QAI (ISLAND OF KOW WAI). PROBABLE LAST PORT, HONG KONG, AND INTENDED DESTINATION THAILAND (POSSIBLY SATTAHIP).

2. MR NEAL CLOSED DOWN TRANSMITTER APPROX 1000Z [0600 EDT] AFTER REPEATED UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS TO RAISE SHIP SINCE APPROX 0800Z [0500 EDT].

16. Subsequent investigation has revealed that the Defense Attache (DATT) was the first official in the US Embassy in Jakarta to receive the information on the Mayaguez. After the DATT received a telephone call from Mr. Neal conveying the information, he enlisted the aid of the Assistant Naval Attache to verify the existence of the Mayaguez and then called the Ambassador to inform him. With the Ambassador's concurrence, the first CRITIC message was prepared by the Defense Attache Office (DAO).¹

The Handling of the CRITICs and the Notification of Principals

17. The appropriate operations and watch centers in the Washington area had all received the first CRITIC message by about 0515 EDT on 12 May. None, however, thought it necessary to awaken their principals immediately with the news that an American merchant ship had *reportedly* been seized by the Cambodian Communists.

18. |

19. Existing procedures did not *clearly* require the officers on duty in the various centers to inform their principals of the CRITIC messages immediately; the officers on duty thus obviously felt free to make the judgment that it would be desirable to await further information. And officers in three of the four operations/watch centers which are a part of the Community in effect made precisely that judgment, as the following table suggests:

Community Agency	Senior Official or Principal Notified	Time of Notification	Principal Notified	Mode & Approx. Time of Notification
CIA	Director, Office of Current Intelligence	0630	DCI	Telephone calls 0635
DIA	Deputy Director for Intelligence (DDI/DIA)	0610	A/Chrmn. JCS	Briefing 0800
INR†	Director, INR	0720	Sec of State	Briefing 0800††

†Acting together with the State Department Operations Center.

††A late item on the Mayaguez was inserted in the Secretary's *Morning Summary* and sent to all Department principals at 0700.

Officers at NSA notified the Deputy Director for Operations—who was then in effect standing in for the Director, NSA—at 0517 EDT by telephone.*

20. The Community's operations centers were, of course, extremely busy during the early hours of the morning handling problems associated with the arrival of the several CRITICs, seeking further information concerning the incidents, and taking actions appropriate to their individual missions.

- In DIA, for example, the operations center (NMIC) called Honolulu at 0550 EDT and discussed the first two CRITICs with IPAC, inter alia suggesting the likelihood of a need for immediate reconnaissance activity in the area of the incident.

- In CIA, the operations center immediately informed the night editor of the *National Intelligence Daily* of the contents of the first CRITIC. The hour was too late for the CRITIC's inclusion in the NID, but a suitable briefing note was then prepared. This was used at 0800 EDT (by a CIA briefing officer) to inform the President of the incident.

21. The contents and the times of receipt of the individual CRITIC messages also help to explain why most officers on duty at the various operations centers did not see an instant need for notifying principals. The first CRITIC—arriving in Washington operations centers around 0511 EDT—stated clearly enough that a Mayday from the Mayaguez had been heard. But the reliability of the original source of the message was completely unknown, and the circumstances of the seizure were still very murky.

*Elsewhere, in centers not a part of the Community, the White House Situation Room briefed the Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs at about 0730 EDT; NMCC alerted the Director, J-3 (Operations) at 0640 EDT, having previously notified the Service operations centers at about 0530 EDT.

22. The second CRITIC, received minutes later (at 0518 EDT), did not clarify the circumstances but did suggest that the crew of the Mayaguez was not in any immediate danger. Because of procedural and technical problems, the third CRITIC—which also did not clarify—was not received in any of the Washington operations centers other than NSA.

23. The fourth CRITIC, which came into the operations center around 0630 EDT, was helpful in that—originating from another source—it confirmed the existence of the Mayday broadcast and lent credence to the earlier report that the Mayaguez was then being towed toward Kompong Som. But, at this hour, there seemed to many to be very little point in telephoning principals when they could probably be reached in their offices and briefed in person by 0700 or 0730 EDT.

24. The fifth and last CRITIC (and the fourth from Jakarta) arrived at 0650 EDT; it provided additional useful information about the Mayaguez itself and corrected some apparent misinformation about the time of seizure contained in the first message. But a great many questions still could not be answered. Answers, in fact, would require the kind of on-the-scene surveillance which J-3, acting on the basis of the information provided by the CRITICs, had already begun to initiate.

IV. AFTER THE SEIZURE

25. Tactical reconnaissance aircraft were airborne and en route to the site of the Mayaguez seizure by 0957 EDT on 12 May. From that point on, most of the intelligence concerning the fate of the Mayaguez and its crew was acquired by operational units of the US Pacific Command (PACOM) in or near the area. The Community was thus dependent over the next few days on the ability of these units (operating under difficult conditions in the field) to obtain information, and on its own ability to receive and use that information as quickly and effectively as possible.

26. The following paragraphs constitute a log of sorts of how the Community responded to the crisis, as recorded in its publications and its briefings of top-level consumers of intelligence (all times are EDT):

12 May: None of the national current intelligence publications carried anything on the seizure of the Mayaguez on the morning of 12 May. As indicated, CIA prepared a briefing note for the President which was presented orally at 0800, and the State Department Operations Center prepared a briefing item for the Secretary's Morning Summary. DIA briefed the Acting Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at 0800 and issued a Special Defense Intelligence Note at 0930. The Office of Current Intelligence (OCI) in CIA and the NIO for South and Southeast Asia prepared a one-page briefing item for the DCI to use at the NSC meeting at noon. Both the DIN and this NSC briefing reflected field reports that the Mayaguez was under way toward Kompong Som; in fact, its destination was Koh Tang Island, which could have been reached on approximately the same course.

13 May: DIA contributed the Mayaguez item for the morning National Intelligence Bulletin (NIB); this indicated that the ship was en route to Kompong Som. The NID—with a later deadline—was updated to reflect

newly acquired information that the ship was anchored off Koh Tang. The Acting Chairman of the JCS informed the NSC meeting convened at 1030 that the members of the crew of the Mayaguez were being transferred to a boat and | were to be moved to Koh Tang. The DCI mentioned that the crew could be moved to the mainland at any time. State/INR, in addition to its items in the Secretary's Morning and Afternoon Summaries, prepared a chronology and provided maps and a geographic report for the Secretary. At 1400, it issued a Situation Report which discussed the status of Cambodian defense forces. At 1600, a Situation Report prepared by OCI said that it seemed likely the crew had been moved to the interior of Koh Tang Island; a DIN published by DIA at 1945 indicated that the crew had been transferred to Koh Tang; the DCI reported to the NSC (during a meeting begun at 2230) that most of the crew had probably been moved to Koh Tang.

14 May: (See Map 2.) The morning NIB carried a sentence in mid-item which said in part that "it is possible that some [of the crew] may have been moved [from Koh Tang] to the mainland." The NID headline said: "Cambodians May Hold US Crew on Mainland," with a comment in the text that "it seems likely that at least some were moved to Kompong Som." DIA informally briefed the Chairman, JCS at around 0830 and gave him much the same information. And the story—that at least some of the crew had been moved to the mainland—was reported in the DCI's briefing of the NSC at 1530. (In fact, only the captain of the Mayaguez actually set foot on the mainland.) This briefing also said that those of the crew moved to the mainland could already have been moved from the port of Kompong Som farther inland; further, "at present there is no way of telling where they may be." (The rest of this briefing concerned the status of Cambodian forces, an attack by Cambodians on a Swedish-registry ship, and Thai reactions to the movement of US Marines to U-Tapao.) DIA issued a Special DIN at 1100 discussing the attack on the Swedish ship. There was a regular DIN at 1415 reporting on the Thai reaction to the arrival of the US Marines in Thailand. Both OCI and INR issued Situation Reports at 1600. The marines landed on Koh Tang at about 1910.

15 May: The NIB and NID discussed the fighting on Koh Tang Island and the rescue of the Mayaguez and its crew. A DIN was issued at 0825 with the same message. There were no further Sitreps or NSC briefings.

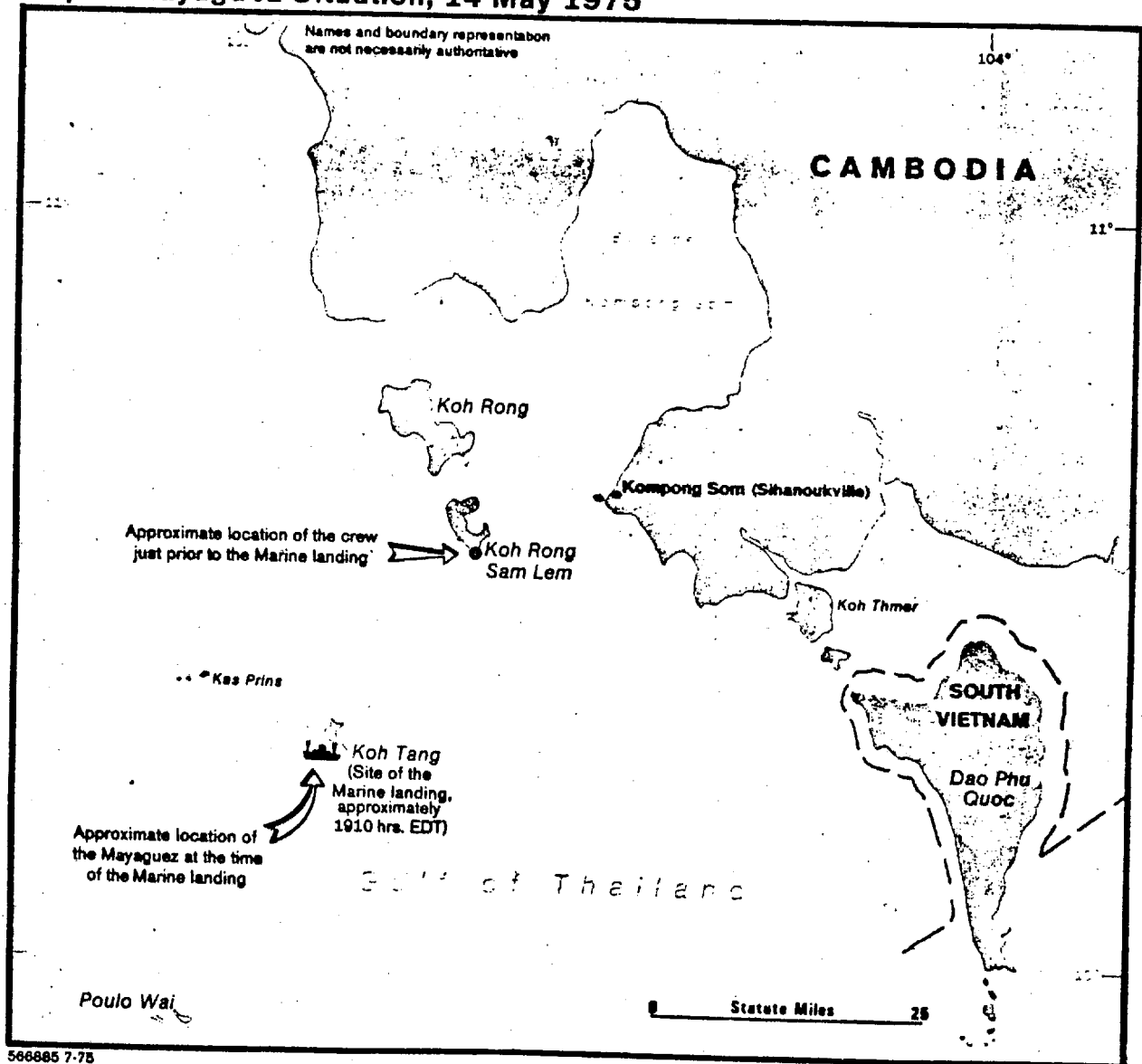
V. SOME COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEMS

27. As implied in the section immediately preceding, the problem of communications—within the Community and between the Community and other elements of the Government—is a central one during crises. Aspects of the problem that seem especially germane to the Mayaguez crisis fall into three categories;

- Those involving a lack of established communications procedures between different elements of the Government.

- Those reflecting the difficulties encountered by various components of the Community when seeking to keep one another informed during the crisis.

Map 2: Mayaguez Situation, 14 May 1975



Warnings to US Merchant Vessels

28. The Mayaguez *could* have been alerted to the seizure of ships by the Cambodians and warned to steer away from the area. Arrangements for issuing such warnings do exist. But they must be described in some detail if the failure to warn the Mayaguez is to be understood.

29. Each year thousands of navigational warnings are routinely issued by the Hydrographic Center of the Defense Mapping Agency. These advisories, which are transmitted by radio and also delivered by mail, provide to ships, shipping companies, and naval commands information about hazards to safe navigation—e.g., newly discovered wrecks, changes in directional aids, etc. Procedures which provide for warning merchant ships of other kinds of dangers—declarations of war, new claims for the reach of territorial seas, etc.—form a Special Warning system, which was established in 1939 and has been (with one brief hiatus) in effect ever since. Only forty-four Special Warnings were issued in the post-war period, and of this total about half merely cancelled earlier warnings. The capture of the Mayaguez prompted the forty-fifth warning.

30. The Maritime Affairs Office in the State Department's Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs is responsible for initiating Special Warnings, together with other Federal agencies which can urge their issuance. It does so on the basis of information from diplomatic and other sources. The Defense Mapping Agency's Hydrographic Center is charged with the dissemination of Special Warnings, which are transmitted during the twice-daily broadcasts of normal navigational advisories over the Radio Navigational Warning Broadcast System.*

31. These procedures for alerting ships were not brought into play until *after* the Mayaguez was seized. The Hydrographic Center of the Defense Mapping Agency, lacking links to the Community, had not been informed of Cambodia's harassment of foreign-flag shipping during the week or so before the capture of the Mayaguez. The Maritime Affairs Office of the State Department was not privy to all the reports issued by the Community either, and thus it too did not recognize the need for a Special Warning.

The Availability of Operational Information

32. During the Mayaguez crisis, some key analysts charged with preparing current intelligence publications and keeping their principals informed did not know the details or the timing of specific US military actions until after those actions had taken place and the Cambodians were already reacting. Thus analysts in some production offices (though apparently not all) were occasionally placed in the position of not knowing whether the Cambodians were taking the initiative or, instead, were reacting to something the US was doing. There were at the time

*There is no provision for unscheduled broadcasts of a Special Warning over the Navigational Warning Broadcast System, nor for any acknowledgement by ships that such a warning has been received. Indeed, ships are not legally obliged to copy navigational or special warnings, and some companies do not require that their ships do so.

means through which a few senior intelligence officials could keep themselves informed about US operational activities. But these means could not be used easily, in the midst of a crisis, by officers in either the intelligence or the operational communities. Moreover, the working-level analyst sometimes was—and always had to recognize that he *might* be—several hours behind the flow of events, a circumstance which did not give the analyst high confidence in his own judgment.

33. This is not a new or unusual problem. It stems in part and in a very broad sense from the peripheral position of intelligence during policy-making and operational phases of a crisis. It also reflects the need of military elements to protect the security of their operations. Still, the inability of analysts to learn of US military actions in progress or under consideration can adversely affect the quality of their analysis. In the Mayaguez instance, a more open dialogue between working levels of operational elements and the Intelligence Community might have resulted in more pertinent intelligence contributions to the decision-making process and to operational planning as well.

Vertical Reporting

34. A related problem as time narrows in a crisis is the tendency in the Community (and elsewhere) to emphasize "vertical reporting" at the expense of the lateral passage of information. The Community consists of a number of related but independent organizations, all but one of which (CIA) are constituent parts of larger Government departments. The flow of information among them is seldom as systematic and as open as the flow of information upward. This is a serious problem, one which is frequently attacked, sometimes eased, but never wholly solved.

35. The failure of operations centers to activate the NOIWON conferencing system when the CRITICs arrived on 12 May illustrates the nature of the problem. It now seems doubtful that a NOIWON conference could have changed the way these centers handled the situation or affected the timing of their notification of principals. But NOIWON—a lateral link—should have been used in addition to (or in lieu of) bilateral exchanges and "vertical reporting."

The Necessary Telephone

36. Another matter of concern is the extensive (and perhaps increasing) use during crises of telephone communications to issue directives and solicit information. Rapid telephone communications are without question indispensable. Often, however, the information so exchanged is not recorded, remains known only to the callers, and cannot be verified. All operations/watch centers maintain activity logs, but these are often unavoidably neglected during crises. The problem obviously resists solution but is necessarily of particular concern to the Community.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING CURRENT AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES

Community Strengths

40. As can be seen in the preceding, this survey of the recent performance of the Intelligence Community during the Mayaguez crisis has revealed a number of shortcomings which demand corrective action, lest they reappear in future crises. These shortcomings reflect the need for some repair and fine tuning. But overall the Community's support machinery reacted effectively to the crisis.

41. The collection system displayed its ability to respond quickly and with great flexibility to the urgent demands of a crisis.

42. The production offices in CIA, DIA, and INR/State provided necessary reports, assessments, and basic intelligence on extremely short notice to appropriate users and top-level consumers. The National Intelligence Officers effectively used liaison machinery (established long before the onset of the crisis) to respond to the DCI's need for Community support, especially during the preparation of briefings for the NSC.

Explicit Recommendations

43. Drawing on our findings concerning the Mayaguez incident, we offer below a series of recommendations for improving the work of the Community during crises. Under each recommendation, we provide a rationale for the proposal and a description of efforts currently under way to find solutions to the principal problems identified during the course of our survey.

Approved For Release 2005/03/14 : CIA-RDP81M00980R003100080014-5

Approved For Release 2005/03/14 : CIA-RDP81M00980R003100080014-5

Approved For Release 2005/03/14 : CIA-RDP81M00980R003100080014-5

Approved For Release 2005/03/14¹⁹ : CIA-RDP81M00980R003100080014-5